

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFORMAL LEARNING: THE BACKCHANNEL

A toolkit for successful implementation of an engaging backchannel in your organization



## Build a Team Charter

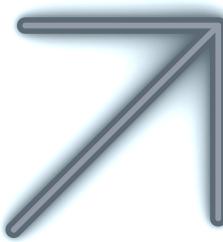
Engage your team in building a charter, identify the following:

- Shared goals
- Values
- Mission
- Expected Behaviours

## Determine Baseline Digital Literacy

Establish the baseline digital literacy level needed to be effective in the backchannel.

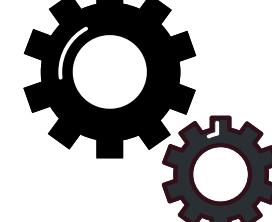
- Survey the existing digital literacy levels of users.
- Select a digital literacy program.
- Offer the training to address digital literacy gaps in the community.



## Develop Behaviour Expectations

Establish a strong leading presence (facilitator or instructor) to model expected behaviour.

- Leaders should engage in the backchannel community and demonstrate a standard for behaviour, language, and content.
- Consider the use of paralanguage to create a personal, informal feel.
  - Emojis
  - Exaggerated punctuation
  - Spelling for emotional emphasis



## Introduce the Tools

Introduce a variety of tools and resources that users can choose from.

- Find out what features are valued to the users.
- Match these values with potential resources that are available.

## Facilitate Informed Decisions

Share knowledge and resources about the tools so that users may make informed decisions.

- Provide information on:
  - Privacy
  - Data Collection
  - Distribution
  - Security
  - Environmental Impact
  - Others, as required



## Demonstrate in a Sandbox

Set up a sandbox environment.

- Encourage user testing and engagement
- Ask users to incorporate existing culture and practices into the new space
- Obtain feedback from the testing
- Strategize on how to improve the community experience



## Encourage Participation

Promote group bonding, empathy, and sense of belonging.

- Consider introducing:
  - Games
  - Synchronous or real-time video
  - interactive content

## Introduce Peer Mentoring

Identify advanced and experienced users in the community.

- Encourage a team approach where members support each other's learning
- Encourage dialogue and coaching
- Consider:
  - Ensuring the back channel is a safe and trusted place for team members to engage
  - Collaborative activities are available where team members can discuss, share, reflect, and grow
  - Peer mentor tools
  - Tools for increased team organization



## Engage in Reflective Feedback

Promote self-awareness.

- Support reflective activities
  - Individual reflection
  - Small group reflection
- Apply reflections to larger scale change

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